

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 071352Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5053

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 AMMAN 4568

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OREP (BONKER, DON)

SUBJECT: CODEL BONKER VISIT TO JORDAN

1. SUMMARY: CONGRESSMAN DON BONKER, NEWLY APPOINTED MEMBER OF HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE HAD PRODUCTIVE ONE-DAY ORIENTATION VISIT TO JORDAN JULY 6-7 WHICH INCLUDED MEETINGS WITH KING HUSSEIN, CROWN PRINCE HASSAN AND PRIME MINISTER RIFAI AS WELL AS TOUR OF BAKAA PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CAMP AND DISCUSSIONS WITH CAMP LEADERS. MAJOR TOPICS OF DUSCUSSION INITIATED BY BONKER, REFLECTING ISRAELI CONCERNS VOICED TO HIM, WERE: USG AIR DEFENSE SALE TO JORDAN, JORDANIAN RELATIONS WITH SYRIA AND ATTITUDE TO MIDEAST NEGOTIATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. DISCUSSIONS WITH PRIME MINISTER RIFAI FOCUSED ON U.S. ASSISTANCE TO JORDAN AND CURRENT CONGRESSIONAL DELIBERATIONS REGARDING USG SALE OF HAWK MISSILES TO JORDAN. PM RIFAI STRESSED CRITICAL JORDANIAN NEED FOR AN AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM AS MEANS OF STRENGTHENING JORDANIAN CAPACITY FOR SELF-DEFENSE, ON WHICH ITS POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE AND POLICY OF MODERATION ULTIMATELY DEPENDS. HE MENTIONED THAT ALL JORDAN'S NEIGHBORS HAVE AN AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM AND THAT ACQUISITION IS

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ALSO IMPORTANT IN MAINTAINING MORALE OF JORDAN ARMY. IN

REPLY TO QUERY BY CONGRESSMAN BONKER, PM RIFAI STATED SYSTEM IS NEEDED TO PROTECT "JORDANIAN SKIES" AGAINST POTENTIAL AGGRESSORS, THAT ITS PURPOSE IS DEFENSIVE AND THAT IT ONLY COVERS SMALL PORTION OF JORDAN.

3. RIFAI SAID JORDAN HAS BEEN UNDER STRONG PRESSURES TO ACCEPT AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM FROM USSR. SYRIA AND OTHERS BUT WISHES TO PURCHASE SYSTEM FROM THE US AND HAS AGREEMENT FROM SAUDI ARABIA TO PROVIDE FUNDING HE FEARED THAT JORDAN WOULD BE FORCED TO TURN TO SYRIA IF HAWK SALE WAS BLOCKED, WITH ALL THE ATTENDANT RISKS. KING HUSSEIN RECONFIRMED TO CONGRESSMAN BONKER THAT JORDAN WOULD BE UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE TO ACCEPT SYRIAN AIR DEFENSE IF HAWK SALE DID NOT MATERIALIZE. BOTH KING HUSSEIN AND RIFAI INDICATED THAT AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM HAS BEEN A MAJOR COMMITMENT TO JORDAN BY USG DURING PAST YEAR, INVOLVING DISCUSSIONS WITH BOTH PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY KISSINGER AND THAT THEY HOPED SALE COULD PROCEED UNIMPEDED.

4. IN RESPONSE TO CONGRESSMAN BONKER'S OBSERVATION THAT US FOREIGN AID COMING UNDER INCREASING FIRE PUBLICLY AND IN CONGRESS, RIFAI STRESSED HEAVY GOJ DEPENDENCE ON U.S. MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID IN SUPPORT OF ITS POLITICAL STABILITY AND INDEPENDENCE AND JORDAN'S RELUCTANCE TO RELY EXCLUSIVELY ON ARAB ASSISTANCE BECAUSE OF POLITICAL PRICE THIS WOULD INVOLVE.

5. IN HOUR LONG SESSION, KING HUSSEIN DISCUSSED ARAB-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS AT LENGTH, INDICATING HIS ANXIETY OVER POSSIBILITY OF RESUMPTION OF WAR AND HIS CONCERN WITH ISRAELI MILITARY BUILD-UP IN RECENT MONTHS ON WEST BANK. HE REAFFIRMED HIS FULL SUPPORT FOR SUCCESSFUL ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN INTERIM STEP IN SINAI. KING FELT THAT PRESIDENT SADAT'S POSITION INTERNALLY WILL BE GRAVELY WEAKENED IF INTERIM NEGOTIATIONS ARE UNSUCCESSFUL. EVEN IF INTERIM STEP WAS ACHIEVED, KING FEARED THAT EXTREMIST ELEMENTS COULD DESTABILIZE AREA IF LONG PERIOD OF STALEMATE ENSUED IN NEGOTIATIONS. KING WENT OVER HISTORY OF JORDANIAN INVOLVEMENT IN
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MIDEAST NEGOTIATIONS AND ITS DECISION TO CEDE RESPONSIBILITY TO PLO FOR NEGOTIATIONS FOR RECOVERY OF WEST BANK AT RABAT CONFERENCE. HE SAID IT NOW UP TO PLO TO PROVE WHETHER OR NOT IT CAPABLE AND WILLING TO UNDERTAKE A NEGOTIATING ROLE.

6. KING DEFENDED JORDAN'S RECENT RAPPROCHEMENT WITH SYRIA. HE FELT JORDAN COULD NOT FOREVER REMAIN ISOLATED

IN ARAB WORLD AND THAT JORDANIAN DIALOGUE WITH SYRIANS AND OTHER ARABS INTRODUCED MODERATING INFLUENCE. JORDAN HAS ALSO RECENTLY OBTAINED SYRIAN COOPERATION IN POLICING JORDANIAN BORDER AGAINST FEDAYEEN INFILTRATORS AIMING AT CROSS BORDER OPERATION SINTO WEST BANK. KING HUSSEIN POLITELY CHALLENGED CONGRESSMAN BONKER'S ASSERTION THAT ASAD NOT SUFFICIENTLY MODERATE ON ARAB-ISRAELI ISSUE AND SUGGESTED BONKER VISIT SYRIA AND MEET ASAD PERSONALLY.

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7. CROWN PRINCE HASSAN GAVE EXTENSIVE BRIEFING ON JORDANIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS. HE STRESSED THAT JORDAN, AS MODERATE, IS TOO OFTEN TAKEN FOR GRANTED BY U.S. AND ADDED THAT JORDAN IS UNDER PRESSURE, AS MODERATE, TO "KEEP A STEP AHEAD" OF OTHER STATE IN DEVELOPING MEASURES FOR SOVIAL AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS.

8. HE REAFFIRMED HIS SUPPORT FOR KEEPING MOMENTUM OF MIDEAST EFFORT TO ACHIEVE A FINAL PEACE SO THAT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN AREA COULD PROCEED. AS EXAMPLES OF CURRENT PROBLEMS HE MENTIONED FACT THAT 100,000 WEST BANKERS WORKING IN ISRAEL ARE CAUSING DISTORTION OF WEST BANK ECONOMY AND, SECONDLY, THAT POLITICAL CONDITIONS PREVENT JORDAN AND ISRAEL FROM COOPERATING IN MANY AREAS OF MUTUAL BENEFIT SUCH AS IN MINERALS EXTRACTION IN DEAD SEA. CROWN PRINCE NOTED BONKER'S MEMBERSHIP ON COMMITTEE FOR AGING AND BONKER AGREED TO

SEND HIM SOME MATERIALS RELATING TO PROGRAM FOR EMPLOY-
MENT OPPROTUNITIES FOR RETIRED PERSONS WHICH CROWN
PRINCE IS INTERESTED IN INVESTIGATING FOR JORDAN.

9. COMMENT: ON HIS FIRST DIRECT EXPOSURE TO JORDAN
CONGRESSMAN BONKER INDICATED HE EXTREMELY FAVORABLY
IMPRESSED BY THE PERSONAL AND LEADERSHIP QUALITIES
EXHIBITED BY KING HUSSEIN, CROWN PRINCE HASSAN AND
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PRIME MINISTER RIFAI. WHILE INDICATING HIS CONTINUED
STRONG SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL, BONKER STATED HIS BELIEF
IN IMPORTANCE OF ACQUIRING THIS KING OF FIRST-HAND
EXPOSURE TO MIDDLE EAST AND ITS LEADERS IN HIS ROLE AS
CONGRESSMAN WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR HELPING FORMULATE
POLICY IN CRITICAL MIDDLE EAST AREA.

10. THIS TELEGRAM IS UNCLEARED WITH CONGRESSMAN BONKER
AND SUBJECT TO HIS COMMENTS AND REVISION.
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